

### **S33. Naked Kaohsiung: Rethinking Cultural Tourism of Industrial Culture in a Post-industrial Era**

**LEE, Yu-Hsuan**

Assistant Professor of Cultural Studies, Department of International Affairs, Wenzao Ursuline College of Language

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#### **Abstract**

Cultural tourism appears to be a booming industry in Kaohsiung. That is fundamentally driven by urban aesthetics in the last decade. For tourists, Kaohsiung was no longer distinct by its stereotyped past – heavy polluted, export-oriented industrial city. Its current placemaking projects are outward-looking and entrepreneurial. Thus, that move is celebrated the post-industrial era through emerging creative industrial and cultural tourism-related projects on which the local government relies to regenerate the urban area, particularly an upcoming renewal mega-city project around the harbor area (2014 Kaohsiung New Bay Area). In this context, cultural tourism shows contradictory faces of the city, e.g., conservation vs. redevelopment, and new (tourist) industry vs. existing industry. On the one hand, this view updates the complaint of cultural activism, which regards Kaohsiung's urban life as not so much “authentic” as tourist spectacle. On the other hand, one should reconsider how and why visits to Kaohsiung in the post-industrial era have to more engage with industrial culture, e.g., landscape, heritages, working class communities. As a result, many places' authentic aura has been misrepresented, covered up, or even demolished. Broadly, industrial areas are either represented as marginal or strategically redeveloped as tourist spaces.

Curiously, the state's economic arm recently claims an upturn in the number of visitors staying in Kaohsiung via alternative itinerary to those state-owned industrial areas. The state's perspective seems contradict the local government's take on Kaohsiung industrial culture by shifting tourists' attention back to the supposedly authentic interest of a conservation approach. However, this actually shows cultural tourism is strategically taken by the central government as well as the local government as an instrument to increasing visitor numbers and commercial re-development.

For me, an activist once committed to the conservation of industrial heritage, I argue cultural tourism is complicated by such a tension. My case study is about those placemaking and conservation debates over industrial (tourist) spaces across the harbor and post-industrial area, such as Kaohsiung Harbor Train Station, Historically Electronic-Mechanical Street, where manifests power relations in relation to cultural tourism. That is concerned with how the role of authenticity, as Sharon Zukin argues for New York's case in *Naked City*, played in shaping the nature of Kaohsiung's industrial culture. And I seek to elaborate those complex forces that facilitate the tension between origins and new beginnings. I argue for a consumption-based perspective to rethink cultural tourism. That counts on specific traveler's experience in negotiating cultural preservation and commercial redevelopment for seeing Kaohsiung's authenticity of our lifetime.

**Keywords:** Kaohsiung; Industrial Culture

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